

posed that any one would use the saying for unbounded liberties and become free "thinkers and doers" using these liberties for each individual opinion, enter into all denominational communions, be indifferent as to the ordinances or peculiar tenets of the church. The old veterans of the progressive move advocated soundness of the faith, etc., as prerequisite to ordination.

But a retrospective view of our work shows a laxity along this line. Many in their zeal for numbers in membership invited a policy void of government, hence we have suffered and often been placed in embarrassing circumstances thru novices and unscriptural men being promoted into places of trust, and made leaders of innocent flocks until they were only left to mourn the shame of their unworthy trust.

State and church history prove the fact that when the crown became corrupt, disintegration followed, "Like priest, like people," ordained novices, do-as-you-please men, unsound in faith, etc., and the result need not be conjectured. In view of all these facts and many more the Virginia and Maryland Conference unanimously agreed to arrest this indiscretion and throw around her congregations a safeguard not because of her "cumulative wisdom," but because of the cumulative indifference manifested as to soundness of doctrine by a few. St. Paul warned the churches and gave special attention to the subject of ordination. See Titus 1:5-10. He appears to urge that they be sound in doctrine and recommends that the mouths must be stopped who teach things they ought not. When he gave Titus instructions as to applicants for ordination he plainly reminds him that when the applicant is considered that soundness of the faith must not be overlooked. Five times he mentioned this particular qualification.

Now turn to I Timothy 3rd chapter, we find the same careful methods urged, "And let these also first be proved." The gospel surely is not in fault, but the execution of these instructions have been wanting. Who will say the apostles failed to examine very critically the standing and qualification of each man before they laid hands upon them and gave the sacred trust. The resolution referred to as "the wedge" passed at our conference reads as follows:

1. Candidates for ordination to the office of elder must receive the approval of their respective congregation, a copy of which shall be presented to the examining board, said copy to be signed by the clerk and two or more deacons.

2. At an appointed time said candidate shall come before the board, whose duty it shall be to examine him on the following subjects or conditions: (1) Deportment morally and spiritually. (2)

Soundness in the faith. (3) Bible knowledge. (4) Intellectual qualification.

If in the opinion of said board the candidate is a proper person and stands approved on the necessary qualification they then shall give the applicant a recommendation for ordination.

This resolution does not ignore the congregation, they can appoint such as they desire to preach. But when an ordination is requested then they are helped in this important work. It does not pass upon the condition as to his "coat, hat or hair," simply because the gospel gives no such warrant. All such allusions only show how weak a cause must be to grind out such arguments from their own mill of imagination.

We hope the National Conference will give us something better, but until this is done the Virginia and Maryland Conference will endeavor to watch and urge the scriptural tests.

In Virginia and most other states every precaution by law is provided for against quacks in the medical profession. A board of examiners must pass on every applicant for medical license. The mere diploma from a medical school "cuts no figure." By this excellent system these states as a rule have proficient men to serve the public. How much more should the church be concerned as to who shall impart the way of life. Observing the methods of our sister churches we find with the orthodox there is system. Shall we continue to connive at a way for each party to pursue some wild and unguarded dealing in sacred trust, only to reap confusion, corruption and finally disintegration.

*Maurertown, Va.*

#### THE ENTERING WEDGE

JACOB C. CASSEL

The protest of Dr. V. M. Reichard against the Reliance resolution bearing on the ordination of ministers is a point well taken, and should arouse the church from the Atlantic to the Pacific, as it no doubt will, because the resolution undermines, and tends to nullify the very spirit and genius of the institution of the Brethren church. Moreover it is contrary to "gospel alone" doctrine and apostolic church government.

I do however not charge any such motive or intent upon the brethren who deemed it wise to pass such a resolution. I believe that in their zeal for church purity they simply over-looked a fundamental principle in our church organization.

Our government is congregational and as the choosing and ordination of ministers is purely a congregational matter no conference can interfere or step in behind the congregation with any committee without assuming prerogatives that do not naturally belong to it. It

may be assumed that if conference chooses to do so, and the churches consent to it, it is nobody's else business, but that does not hold the principle upon which the church is founded inviolate. If conferences may dictate in the matter of ordinations they may with equal propriety dictate in any other purely congregational questions and thus destroy the entire fabric of our institution for which as Dr. Reichard well says many of us have sacrificed near and dear friends and in some cases large personal interests.

The plea by the editor that legislative bodies may choose who shall sit in them is true, but they cannot say to any constituency whom it shall elect, their authority begins at the door of the legislature; just so with our conferences, it is their prerogative to say who shall or shall not sit in them, but it is not their business to say whom the congregations may or may not send as delegates; no more can they say whom congregations shall ordain to the ministry. The preacher does not become the property of conference before he seeks admission into it.

Again the effort to prevent unworthy men from being ordained must prove useless and futile, because some men may and will pass muster before even very conservative committees, and prove to be unworthy a few years after their ordination. In our Pennsylvania Conference a minister falls into the hands of said conference every year, no matter when or by whom ordained thus giving conference a chance to purge itself and the church of unworthy characters once every year. This surely ought to be a sufficient safeguard against every emergency.

The Pennsylvania Conference has no patent or copyright on its system of government, consequently our Maryland, Virginia and Ohio brethren can adopt our system and thus avoid precautions destructive to the principles of our organization.

#### Sisters' Society C. E.

From the President

A letter from Sister Augustine says the topics of the S. S. C. E. program for National Conference have been assigned, and the persons notified long since, so that they are having ample time for preparation. After careful arrangement, and in due time it will be published. The greater part of the program work fell on the other officers as I was not sufficiently acquainted with the workers west of Pennsylvania to assign topics, so I could only select some of the topics and suggest names.

We need have no fears about the preparation of the program, but let us now turn our attention to the preparation of the papers.